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Passing over some other things which I do not admire, I must say, I agree with Maria in the conclusion of the tale, when she speaks of scandal. I have sat present many times when I have been astonished at the malignant pleasure, some persons took in aspersing the characters of their neighbours, either by insinuations or more positive assertions. A diffidence of my own abilities has often prevented me from expressing the indignation I have felt at such conversation. While I thus condemn scandal, I must admit that a dread of public censure may have its use in making us careful to have our conduct and behaviour always regulated by the strictest propriety. If we are conscious that it is such as is proper we may be assured that even if scandal point her poisoned arrow at us, the tale will not be generally believed, and thus, to a certain degree we may live above the reach of censorious tongues, whose malice is best defeated by innocence, and the necessary caution to shun the appearance as well as the reality of error, in the manner of conducting ourselves. Female honour is of a peculiarly delicate nature; indiscretion may lead us to become really vicious, it often leads us to have the appearance of being so without the actual guilt. If we are sometimes falsely censured, the consciousness of our own integrity and uprightness of conduct will support us under the insinuations and aspersions of the malevolent and censorious.

S.Y.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

SOME years ago when travelling in England, I twice passed through the Potteries of Staffordshire; I shall give the result of my observations.—I first passed them in the night; the flames issuing from the furnaces had a curious effect, when viewed for the first time; I was also struck with an idea of the great wealth of England, and wondered less at her capabilities to carry on her destructive wars, when I beheld such vast capital invested in one single article of manufacture, the earthen ware, which in comparison of some others, would rather appear of minor importance.

These potteries lie in the north west part of Staffordshire, and form a nearly connected extension of villages for several miles, under different names, as Burslem, Hanley-Green, Etruria, &c.

From these extensive manufactories are supplied not only the common articles of earthen ware now in so general use amongst all ranks but also the finer kinds both for use and ornament, which from the inventive genius of the celebrated Wedgwood and others, have attained to such hitherto unrivalled perfection.

My second visit through this extremely populous quarter, was on a summer's evening: I was surprised to find such crowds of people in a state of idleness, men, women, and boys: many of whom, even boys not exceeding 15 or 16, in a state of gross intoxication. I had previously formed an opinion that in England, the people were comparatively more sober than in Ireland: I inquired if it was fair time, or any particular festival; but was answered in the negative: I found it was only St. Monday, and that the workmen finding they could subsist on the high wages which they received for working during part of the week, squandered their earnings in this pernicious manner. I had formerly been a strong advocate for high wages to the working classes of the community, in hopes they might tend to increase their comforts and elevate their views to some higher attainment of intellectual knowledge. But I was somewhat confounded in my former theories, and saw cause to consider that high wages often produce a contrary effect, unless those who receive them have been previously trained to make a good use of them, and to employ their leisure for the purposes of real improvement. It was necessary however to guard myself from misanthropic views, and having found my former theory in part untenable, from falling into the opposite extreme, of considering the working classes merely as beasts of burden, to produce profit to their employers, the rich capitalists. I lamented that the present system of education and public instruction, was not better calculated for fitting the various ranks of society to discharge their respective

duties with propriety, and turning the current of public opinion and example in favour of virtue: as I am thoroughly persuaded that example, and the direction of public manners hence derived, are of far greater consequence than direct instruction.

On making inquiry I found, that owing to a competition among the employers, wages had risen greatly, and that a bad use was made of their superfluous earnings. It is a pity that they took this wrong direction. The instance mentioned in a late commercial report, of the work people employed at the cotton factory at Rothsay in the Isle of Bute, purchasing a library, and employing their leisure hours in reading, forms a pleasing contrast to the misapplication of time and money by the inhabitants of the Potteries. K.

VIRTUE, REASON AND LOVE, AN ALLEGORY.

REASON and Love were the daughters of Virtue; they were both amiable, but Love was more open and possessed less genius than her sister; she was always guided by her and never formed an attachment without her approbation. Her mother's old enemy, the Cyprian queen, had a son whose name also was Love, who often disguised himself under a feigned appearance, but to distinguish him from the daughter of Virtue, he was called Cupid. He inspired mortals with a flame, which not being approved by Reason, soon expired. The two sisters were one day walking, and entering a wood they beheld a sleeping infant: by its side sat Humanity weeping. "Alas," said she, "this beauteous babe was left here no doubt by some unnatural parent, do not let it perish." Love snatched the babe in her arms, saying—"henceforth this shall be my charge." The child grew under the care of Love and imbibed some of her virtues, but she could not withstand the attacks of Cupid who continually presented himself in the shape of her benefactress. In vain Reason expostulated, and Love suffered many painful moments to see her thus led astray. Virtue came one day to see her daughters, who begged she would use her in-

fluence to recall their protégée to her duty. She called to her and spoke as follows. "My dear child, I am displeased with your ingratitude, as well as surprised at your ignorance: my daughters found you a desolate child, they brought you from misery and took care of you, and yet you have not learned to distinguish between them and their worst enemy; Follow the advice of Reason, and you will be safe from his attacks. If you do not, you will feel the ill effects of your conduct; on the contrary if you overcome your weakness, you will have for your reward this crown of flowers; you will resemble in humility the violet which adorns it; and the primrose in modesty; the sweetness of your heart will spread the perfume of the jessamine and lily of the valley. Be spotless like them. The wreath of never fading roses is thornless. I will be glad to bestow it upon you. Know, dear child, when possessed of this crown you will have everlasting happiness and glory. Go endeavour to win it. I wish you success. "With that she embraced her. The heart of the young maid was touched with the words of Virtue, and she turned her thoughts to gain the crown endowed with such precious gifts. FLORELLA.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

OBSERVATIONS ON SOME REMARKS ON STERNE.

SIR,

I THINK that I am a friend to free discussion on all subjects, when conducted with candour and decency. Whether it were the want of these qualities in the communication by "A Reader," in your magazine of December last, in which he drags forth some very improbable anecdotes of Sterne, that made it excite in me so strong a feeling of disapprobation, I cannot positively assert. It is however certain that the paper I have just mentioned, signed "A Reader," his defence of it in February, and lately your "Lover of Simplicity of Character" in the magazine of last month, who has made common cause against poor Laurence—have each of them produced sensations in the per-